



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10

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OFFICE OF
ECOSYSTEMS, TRIBAL AND
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

March 19, 2012

Candace McKinley
Environmental Program Manager
Bureau of Reclamation
Columbia-Cascades Area Office
1917 Marsh Road
Yakima, Washington 98901-2058

Re: Comments on the proposed Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan and Final Programmatic EIS (EPA Project Number: 11-4131 BOR).

Dear Ms. McKinley:

In accordance with our responsibilities under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (FPEIS) for the proposed Yakima River Basin (YRB) Integrated Water Resource Management Plan (Integrated Plan) in Washington State.

In our comments on the Draft PEIS, the EPA expressed concerns with some components of the proposed Integrated Plan due to potential impacts to water quality, wetlands and riparian areas, and habitat. We recommended that the FPEIS include measures to reduce the impacts and improve biota and habitat. We also recommended continued coordination with appropriate agencies throughout the implementation of the proposed Integrated Plan, and monitoring of measures to protect resources in the project area.

The FPEIS was responsive to our concerns on the Draft PEIS. In particular, we appreciate additional information provided on the Bumping Lake Reservoir expansion and Wymer dam components of the Integrated Plan. We understand that subsequent NEPA analyses of project components will address our concerns and recommendations regarding water quality, wetlands, biota, habitat, seismicity, and slope stability. We also believe that success in water supply and use in the YRB will depend on continued cooperation and engagement of federal agencies, the State of Washington, local tribes and communities, and other interested stakeholders in the basin.

If you have any question about our comments, please contact me at (206) 553-1601 or by electronic mail at reichgott.christine@epa.gov or you may contact Theo Mbabaliye of my staff at (206) 553-6322 or by electronic mail at mbabaliye.theogene@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Christine B. Reichgott", is positioned above the typed name.

Christine B. Reichgott, Manager
Environmental Review and Sediment Management Unit